

# Prayer

## Bible study by Felicity Slemp

### Week nineteen

Last week we took a quick look at Jesus' teachings about prayer. He told His followers to ask God to send laborers into the harvest fields because the fields were ready for harvesting. I hope you took the challenge to examine your prayer life to discover if you pray as much for harvesters to be sent as you pray for the harvest to be saved.

Jesus also taught His followers about unity and He modeled for us prayers for unity in John 17. Jesus consistently prayed for believers first, specifically for their unity, and for nonbelievers only afterward. In the terms I used above, Jesus prayed for the harvesters and for the harvest afterward.

Read through Jesus' prayer in John 17 several times this week. Before reading further in this study, write down your thoughts about Jesus' prayer. What truth does the Holy Spirit guide you to as you read and meditate on this prayer?

Who does Jesus pray for and in what order?

Who does Jesus say He is not praying for?

What is the significance of these two issues, if any?

Notice that Jesus begins by asking God to glorify Himself through his Son and by stating that he had brought glory to God by completing the responsibilities God had given him.

Throughout the Old Testament, God reminds his people that their responsibility is to conduct the blessing which God bestowed upon them to all the nations of the earth (See Genesis 12:3, 18:17-19, 22:16-18, 26:2-5, 28:13-15, Exodus 19:3-6). By shouldering this responsibility, all people on earth would come to know the glory of God. Jesus himself reiterates the responsibility of God's people in Matthew 28:18-20 and Acts 1:8 when He tells His disciples to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth, making disciples of all the ethnic groups on earth.

In His prayer in John 17, then, Jesus iterates the theme of the entire Bible by asking God to glorify Himself in the prayers of His people and then working diligently to complete the task of taking the blessing of salvation through Jesus Christ to all peoples. These blessings and responsibilities belong to all followers of Jesus.

In your prayers, I encourage you to first pray for believers among the people group you for which you are praying—even if you are praying for the people on your campus and in your community. Pray for believers to bring glory to God despite their circumstances. Pray for protection and unity and for laborers to be sent to the field.